



Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

Schenectady, NY

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the City of Schenectady for a Brownfields Pilot. Schenectady (population 65,566) is located on the Mohawk River northwest of Albany. The city's importance in the transportation and manufacturing industries began with the opening of the Erie Canal in 1823. In 1886, Thomas Edison established Edison Machine Works, which later became General Electric. From the turn of the century to the early 1960s, General Electric, along with the American Locomotive Company, played a major role in Schenectady's economy and fostered a period of steady growth. Subsequent failure or downsizing of these companies' operations in the city stopped the boom and ushered in an economic decline.

Today, Schenectady's population is down 30 percent from its peak, and the number of residents employed in manufacturing, once nearly 50 percent of the workforce, is now only 5 percent. The loss of the city's employment and tax base has had effects elsewhere. More than 50 percent of the residents are classified as low- to moderate-income, and almost 15 percent live below the poverty level. The city is a federally designated Enterprise Community and a state-designated Enterprise Zone.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Schenectady, New York

Date of Announcement:
June 1999

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: The Pilot targets up to three brownfields in Schenectady, a city in upstate New York whose major manufacturing industries have closed or downsized.

Contacts:

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(518) 382-5093

Regional Brownfields Team
U.S. EPA - Region 2
(212) 637-4314

Visit the EPA Region 2 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/r02earth/superfnd/brownfld/bfmainpg.htm>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

Schenectady has acquired more than 250 potentially contaminated properties through tax foreclosures, and is interested in redeveloping those located in commercial or industrial areas. However, the environmental uncertainty surrounding the sites has thus far discouraged these efforts.

OBJECTIVES

The Pilot's objective is to identify, target, and assess brownfields sites whose cleanup and redevelopment would contribute to the city's economic growth and improve its environmental and public health. The Pilot will seek to further the city's goals of public involvement in environmental decision-making, a clean and healthy environment, and economic revitalization. Further, the city will work with EPA Region 2 to integrate its new rapid site assessment program with the Pilot.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Identifying potential brownfields;
- Performing assessments at up to three sites, whose selection will be based on environmental conditions, redevelopment potential, and community concerns;
- Developing site-specific cleanup plans that account for each site's potential reuse; and
- Performing community involvement and outreach activities to inform residents about the project and solicit their input.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.